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INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002702

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/06/2019
TAGS: PTER PREF PREL PINR IR IZ

SUBJECT: GOI SAYS MEK RELOCATION WILL HAPPEN BY END OF OCTOBER

REF: BAGHDAD 2698

Classified By: Acting DCM Gary A. Grappo for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In a meeting on October 6, the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff Tariq Abdullah and Ashraf Committee Chairman Ali al-Yassery told Pol M/C and SRSG Melkert that the GOI plans to initiate its plan to relocate the Muhajideen-e Khalq (MEK) from Camp Ashraf by the end of October. Yassery stated that the GOI would meet with the MEK during the week of October 11 to inform its leadership of the relocation date and request cooperation in moving peacefully.

If the MEK refuses, Yassery stated the GOI will move security forces into the camp and relocate the residents, forcibly if necessary. During the meeting, SRSG Melkert informed the GOI that UNAMI was prepared to establish a presence at Ashraf to convey the GOI's relocation decision to the MEK and to monitor any relocation effort. END SUMMARY.

MEK Relocation By End of October

¶2. (C) On October 6, PM Chief of Staff Tariq Abdullah requested a meeting with Pol M/C and SRSG Melkert to convey the GOI's decision to relocate the MEK by the end of October.

Abdullah began the meeting by reiterating the GOI's position that the MEK is an officially designated terrorist organization that participated in the killing of Iraqi citizens during the Saddam regime. Abdullah said that the MEK maintains weapons, uniforms, and a military command structure inside Camp Ashraf that is creating problems with other countries (i.e. Iran) and that the MEK violently resisted the GOI's attempt to assert its sovereignty by placing a police station inside Ashraf. Abdullah reiterated the GOI's written assurances to treat the residents of Ashraf humanely and not to repatriate them to countries where they have reason to fear they might be tortured.

¶3. (C) Ashraf Committee Chairman Ali al-Yassery then stated that he was planning to travel to Ashraf during the week of October 11 to inform the MEK leadership of the exact timing of the relocation, although he did not specify the GOI's relocation date other than to say that it would happen before the end of the current month. (Note: Yassery's visit to Ashraf was originally scheduled for October 7, but he cancelled for undisclosed reasons. End note.) Yassery asked that the U.S. and UNAMI be present when he met with the MEK leadership and that the meeting take place at the GOI police station within Ashraf. He expressed hope that the MEK leadership would cooperate, but said that if they were not, the GOI was prepared to reinforce its riot forces and send them into the camp to transfer the Ashraf residents "group by group" over the course of several days. Pol M/C acknowledged the GOI's authority to relocate the Ashraf residents, but emphasized that the U.S. would hold the GOI to its written assurances to treat the MEK humanely. Pol M/C also underscored the GOI's need to be as transparent as possible in its dealings with the MEK including making every reasonable effort to do the relocation peacefully as well as

issuing a public justification for the relocation effort in order to inform fully the international community of its justifications.

UNAMI Raises its Profile at Ashraf

14. (C) During the meeting, SRSG Melkert informed the GOI that UNAMI was prepared to send a monitoring team of 2-3 persons (plus security and administrative staff) to Ashraf next week in order to monitor the situation on the ground. (Note: This in order to monitor the situation on the ground. (Note: This decision followed numerous Embassy engagements with Melkert to press a request that UNAMI assume a greater role in mediating between the GOI and the MEK. MNF-I will transport a UNAMI team to Camp Ashraf on October 7 for the purposes of conducting an assessment of the Camp Grizzly facilities as well as to allow UNAMI to meet with the MEK leadership directly (reftel). End note.) Melkert stated that UNAMI's representative will try to meet with the MEK leadership on October 7 and would convey to the MEK leadership that the GOI's decision to relocate camp residents is irreversible and that the UN stands ready to help any Ashraf resident wanting to apply for refugee status and relocate to a third country.

15. (C) COMMENT: The GOI's apparent decision not to delay the relocation of the Ashraf residents until after national elections is a disappointing, although anticipated, development. However, UNAMI's decision to take a greater role in the process is welcome news and one that may help to encourage productive discussions between the GOI and MEK as well as provide the GOI political cover for its decision to

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relocate the MEK. We will continue to emphasize the need for transparency from the GOI to maintain a positive public image and will offer a proposed strategy for next steps septel.

END COMMENT.

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